

# Instructions for Making a Small Bag

## Introduction

This project will provide you with step-by-step instructions on how to create a small bag like the one shown to the right. The small bag can be used as a gift bag for special occasions or to hold candy or chocolate. It is recommended that you have *Let's Sew: A Beginner's Sewing Guide* by Nancy Zieman or another basic sewing book nearby for reference.

This project is intended for beginning sewers. The following instruction set is separated into four sections: Preparation, Finishing the Top Edge of Your Bag, Finishing the Sides of Your Bag, and Using the Bag. It should take approximately 45 minutes to complete this project. Have fun!

## Materials

- ½ yard (0.46 m) muslin (or other suitable cotton fabric)
- 22 inches (56 cm) of ¼-inch (0.64 cm) ribbon
- Ruler or tape measure
- Scissors
- Iron
- Spool of thread
- Sewing machine
- Ink pad and stamps
- Needle



## Glossary

**Baste Down**—Use a needle and thread to hand stitch fabric in place with large stitches before using the sewing machine

**Lengthwise Grain**—Yarns that run parallel to the selvages (selvages are tightly woven finished edges of a piece of fabric); see p. 26 in *Let's Sew: A Beginner's Sewing Guide*

**Muslin**—Type of fabric made of cotton or cotton polyester fibers

**Pivot**—Turning a corner when you are sewing with a machine (stitch to the corner, stop with the needle down in fabric, lift the presser foot, turn the fabric, lower the presser foot and continue sewing); see p.13 in *Let's Sew: A Beginner's Sewing Guide*

**Press**—Using an iron to make a fold or crease in the fabric

**Raw Edge**—The unfinished or cut edge of the fabric

**Reinforce (backstitch)**—To sew over an area again (sew 2 or 3 stitches, adjust the machine to stitch in reverse, sew 2 or 3 stitches again); see p.36 in *Let's Sew: A Beginner's Sewing Guide*

**Wrong/Right Side**—A piece of fabric usually has a printed side and an under side. The printed side is the right side. It is the side that you want to have showing on the outside of the finished bag. The wrong side is the side that you don't want to see on the outside of the finished bag. The muslin fabric used this project may be the same on both sides. In this case, just decide in the beginning which side you want to use as the right side and mark it.

## Instructions

### Preparation

1. Cut a piece of muslin or similar fabric 12 by 16½ inches. The 12-inch length cut should be on the lengthwise grain. See Figure 1.
2. Decide which of the two long edges will be the top of the bag.

### Finishing the top edge of your bag

3. Fold over ¼ inch of fabric to the wrong side, as shown in Figure 1.

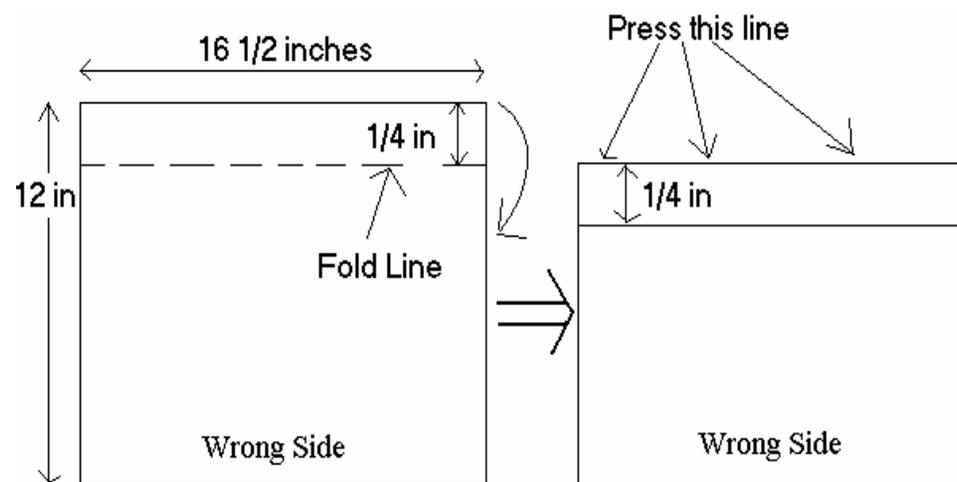
*Note:* Make sure the wrong side is up.

4. Press and baste down this newly folded edge if necessary. See Figure 1.

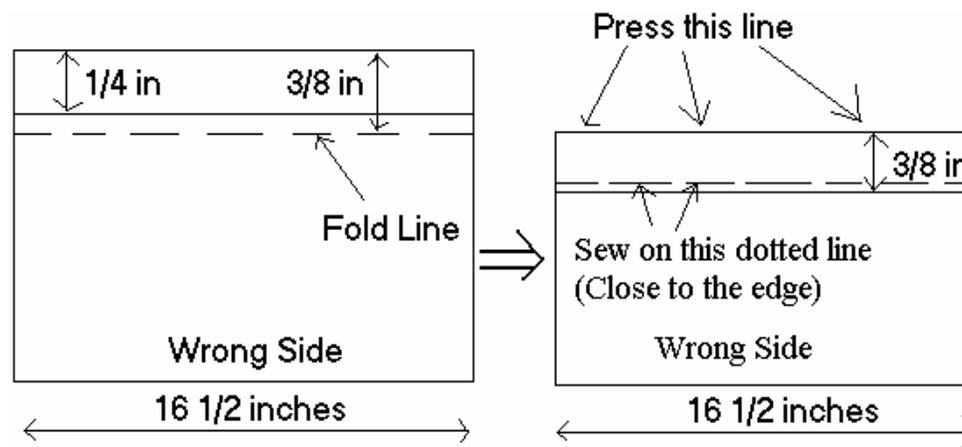
5. Turn another 3/8 inch, covering the raw edges to make a hem. Pin, hand baste, and press the hem in place before stitching as indicated in the next step. See Figure 2.

6. Using the machine, sew the hem close to the edge as shown by the dashed line in the right picture of Figure 2.

*Notes:* Be sure the stitching is close enough so the hem does not flip up or the raw edge shows, and be sure you remove the pin before sewing over that area.



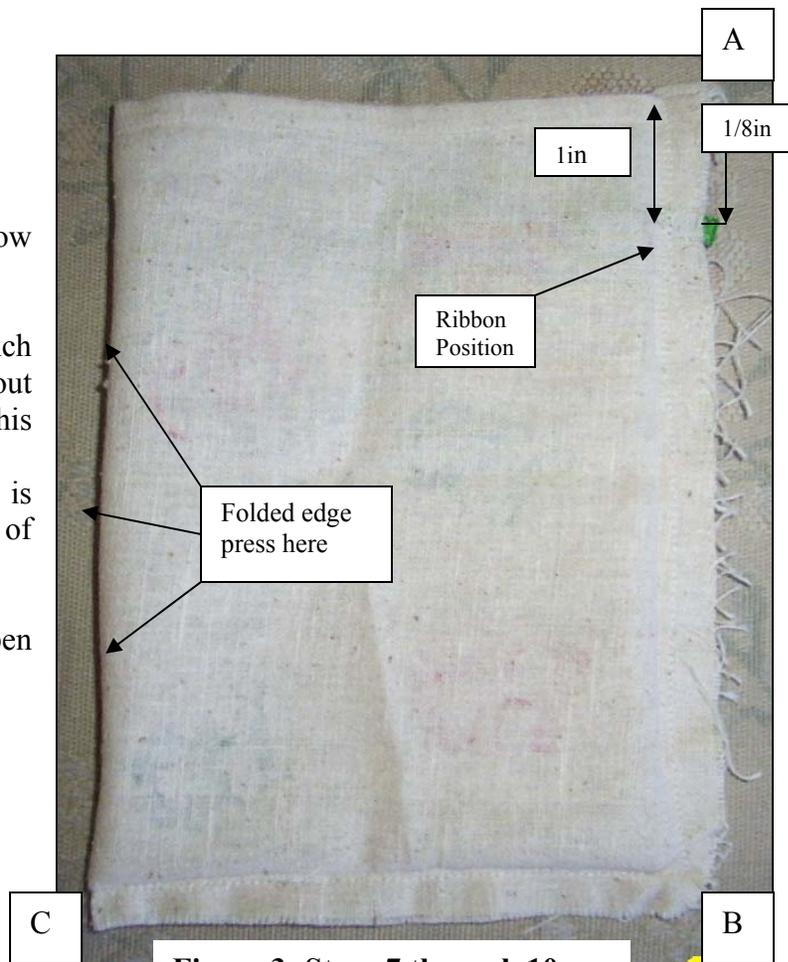
**Figure 1: Steps 1 through 4**



**Figure 2: Steps 5 and 6**

### ***Finishing the sides of your bag***

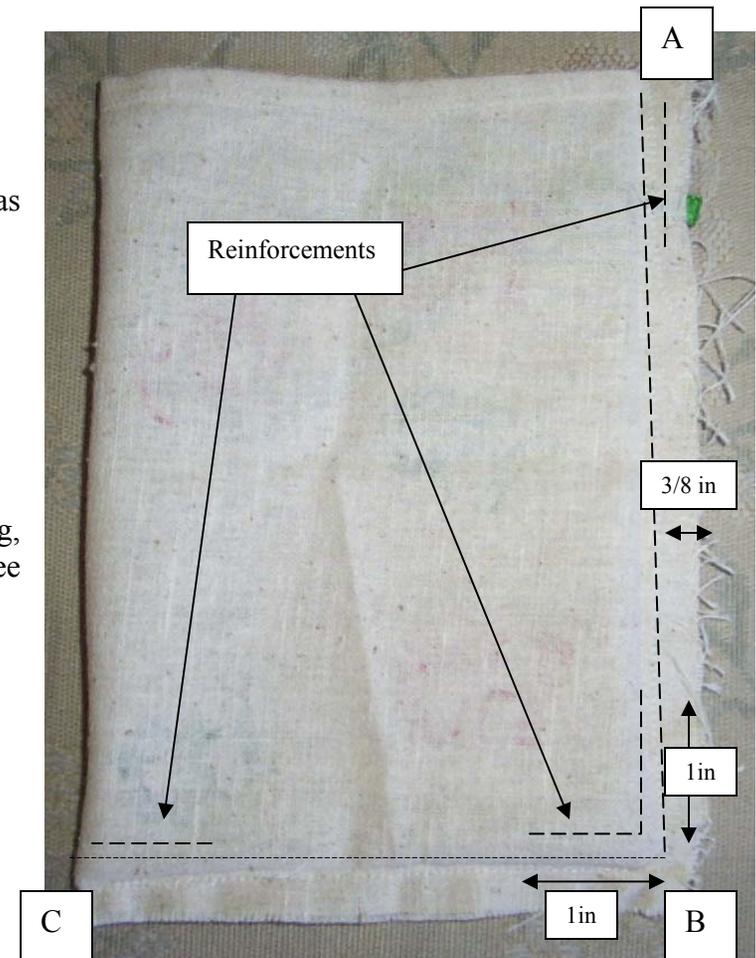
7. Obtain your 22 inches of  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch ribbon and fold it in half so that it now measures 11 inches.
8. Place the folded ribbon on the fabric so its folded end is sticking out  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch from the right edge of the fabric. The folded end of the ribbon should be about 1 inch down from the top edge at "A." See Figure 3 for the placement of this ribbon.  
*Note:* Figure 3 is a picture after the next step for folding the fabric is completed. This is why only a small piece of the ribbon is shown. The rest of the ribbon is on the inside (right side) of the bag.
9. Fold the fabric in half by placing the right side edges together. Keep the open side of the fold to the right. See Figure 3.  
*Note:* The wrong side should face out.
10. Press this newly folded edge.



**Figure 3: Steps 7 through 10**

You are almost done. . . . ***Keep up the good work!***

11. Reinforce the stitch at point “A” by backstitching at the start. See Figure 4.  
*Note:* Make sure the folded edge of the ribbon is caught in the seam allowance.
12. Using the machine, sew a seam  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch from the edge between points A and B as shown by the dashed line in Figure 4.
13. Pivot at point “B”.
14. Continue sewing with machine from point “B” to “C.” See Figure 4.
15. Backstitch at point “C” to reinforce the stitching.
16. Reinforce the stitch at point “B” by sewing over the top of the previous stitching, starting an inch before the pivot and ending an inch after the pivot point. See Figure 4.
17. Press seams.
18. Clip threads.
19. Clip the corner of point B to reduce excess bulk. See Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Steps 12-19**

20. Turn bag right side out.

21. Press.

22. Using stamps, stamp design(s) on the right side of bag to your liking.

***Using the bag***

23. Put in a gift or some candy.

24. Tie the bag at the opening.

25. Enjoy!

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